

**FLANIGAN EMERGENCY WILD HORSE REMOVAL PLAN
AND ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT**

**U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Carson City Field Office
Renewable Resources
5665 Morgan Mill Road
Carson City, Nevada 89701**

September 15, 1999

I. Purpose and Authority

The proposed action is to remove approximately 180 wild horses which are threatened by loss of habitat due to the Fish Fire which burned 47,000 acres including 10,533 acres (61%) of the Herd Management Area (HMA) in August of 1999. The removal of wild horses would facilitate the reestablishment of the native plant community.

The problem is twofold, the HMA can no longer supply enough forage for the entire herd and grazing animals will negate reseeding efforts and impair natural vegetative regeneration of the HMA. Therefore, 180 wild horses need to be removed.

The animals will be removed in the Fall of 1999 or as soon as possible. Authority for this action is contained in the Wild Free Roaming Horse and Burro Act of 1971 (Public Law 92-195) and regulations contained in 43 CFR 4720.1 and 4770.3(c).

II. Area of Concern

The area of concern is the Flanigan HMA and surrounding area. The location of the area is shown on the attached map. Prior to the fire some horses had already dispersed to areas outside of the HMA and it appears that many more animals have now dispersed. Wild horses cannot legally be managed outside of the HMA and much of the area outside of the HMA has also burned.

III. Numbers of Wild Horses

Based on the latest census (Jul. 98) and a projected 15% rate of increase there are an estimated 180 wild horses inside and outside of the Flanigan HMA. Grass seedlings are very vulnerable to grazing. Therefore, all wild horses will be temporarily removed from the HMA for 2 growing seasons to allow grasses to become established. Approximately 30 to 50 wild horses will be temporally placed in private pastures while the HMA recovers. After 2 growing seasons or fire restoration goals have been met horses will be placed back into the HMA. If 30 wild horses are placed back into the HMA it will take approximately 4 years for the population to reach the lower end of the Appropriate Management Level (AML;80-124 horses).

Native grass plants require a minimum of 2 growing seasons to become established. Therefore, only 30 to 50 wild horses will be placed back into the HMA after 2 growing seasons. The plant community will benefit from reduced grazing pressure as the horse population increases towards the AML. In the long term the horses, wildlife and livestock will benefit from a fully established plant community, which takes years to recover from a fire. The carrying capacity of a healthy plant community is substantially greater than one that is degraded.

The rate of increase for wild horses is somewhat density dependent. At low population densities there is abundant forage which will allow most mares to successfully rear a foal. As the population density increases, forage resources become

increasingly scarce resulting in a lower rate of population growth. Rates of population growth for the Flanigan HMA have ranged from 10 to 30%. Once the habitat has recovered, the wild horses will be managed in accordance with the Flanigan Herd Area Management Plan (HMAP;1990).

An attempt will be made to capture all wild horses associated with the Flanigan HMA, however, past experiences have demonstrated that complete removals are usually unattainable. Therefore, a subsequent gather may be needed in the spring should residual animals concentrate on burned areas and substantially impact revegetation efforts.

IV. Methods for Removal and Safety

The Flanigan Wild Horse Removal Plan (1993) outlines current removal procedures. Copies of the plan can be obtained by contacting the Carson City Field Office.

V. Disposition of Removed Animals

Adoptable wild horses (9 years and under) will be sent to Palomino Valley Wild Horse and Burro Placement Center to be prepared for adoption. Older unadoptable animals may be placed in HMA's that are below AML or in sanctuaries. Approximately 30 to 50 wild horses will be placed into a private pasture for 2 growing seasons. When the habitat can once again support a population of wild horses, these horses will be released back into the Flanigan HMA. For added security and to positively identify Flanigan horses a numeric freeze mark will be applied to all Flanigan horses prior to placing them into a private pasture.

Impounded, privately-owned animals will be handled in accordance with the Bureau of Land Management, Nevada State Office Instruction Memoranda NV-84-116 and NV-85-416.

VII. Responsibility

The Field Manager, Carson City Field Office, is responsible for maintaining and protecting the health and welfare of the wild horses. To ensure the contractor's compliance with the contract stipulations, the Contracting Officers Representative (COR) and the Project Inspectors (PIs), all from the Carson City Field Office will be on site. Also, the Assistant Field Manager and the Field Manager are very involved with guidance and input into this removal plan and with contract monitoring. The health and welfare of the animals is the overriding concern of the Staff.

The COR and/or PIs will constantly, through observation, evaluate the contractors ability to perform the required work in accordance with the contract stipulations. Compliance with the contract stipulations will be through issuance of written instructions to the contractor, stop work orders and default procedures should the contractor fail to perform work in accordance to the stipulations.

Prior to issuance of the "Notice to Proceed" to the contractor, the COR and PIs will inspect the equipment to be used during the contract, to insure the equipment meets or exceeds the standards contained in the contract stipulations. Prior (less than 20 days) to the start of the contract and constantly during the course of the contract the COR and/or PIs will evaluate the conditions which may cause undue stress to the animals. The factors considered will include animal condition, prevailing temperatures, drought conditions, soil conditions, topography, animal distribution, distance animals travel to water, quantity of available water and condition of roads that animals are to be transported over. These factors will be evaluated to determine if additional constraints other than those already discussed above, need to be initiated in order to safely capture and transport the animals (i.e. veterinarian present, or delay of capture operations).

FLANIGAN EMERGENCY HORSE REMOVAL

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

EA-NV-030-99-054

B. CHAPTER I - INTRODUCTION/PURPOSE AND NEED

a. Introduction:

Wild horses in the Flanigan Herd Management Area (HMA) are managed under provisions of the Flanigan Herd Management Area Plan (HMAP; 1990). The Appropriate Management Level (AML) was set in the HMAP and ranges from 80 to 124 wild horses. Removals of wild horses from the Flanigan HMA are conducted as prescribed in the Flanigan Wild Horse Removal Plan (WHRP; 1993). This environmental assessment (EA) tiers from and incorporates by reference appropriate portions of the Flanigan HMAP and WHRP. It also analyzes the impacts resulting from the emergency removal of wild horses from the Flanigan HMA.

Recent wildfires in the area have drastically reduced the forage available for horses, livestock and wildlife within the HMA. Also, grazing animals will substantially impact revegetation efforts for the area. Copies of the Flanigan Herd Management Area Plan (1990) and the Flanigan Wild Horse Removal Plan (1993), are available from this office upon request.

b. Purpose and Need:

The purpose of the proposed action is to temporarily remove all wild horses from the Flanigan HMA and surrounding areas. To allow for the recovery of the range and maintain the health of the horses. Younger animals (9 years and under) will be placed into the adoption program, the oldest animals will be placed in a sanctuary. Approximately 30 to 50 animals will be temporarily placed into private pastures for 2 growing seasons, until the range has recovered to a point where grazing will not adversely impact the vegetative community.

The need for the proposed action stems from the impacts to the habitat resulting from the Fish Fire (August 1999). The fire burned 47,000 acres, including 61% of the Flanigan HMA. Evaluation of post fire conditions in the HMA reveals, that there is not enough forage to support the current population of horses, livestock and wildlife. Also, continued grazing will impair the revegetation effort for the HMA.

In order for the native perennial grasses to reestablish themselves naturally and from seeding (rehabilitation) efforts the HMA needs to be rested from grazing. Reestablishment of native vegetation and non-invasive non-native species is needed to provide forage for wildlife, livestock and horses. It is also critical in the prevention of excessive soil erosion, protection of downstream water quality, and preventing or reducing the spread of noxious weeds. Ideally no grazing would take place for 2 growing seasons after a fire or until fire restoration goals have been met.

Native forage grasses require 2 growing seasons to become established. During the establishment period they are very vulnerable to grazing. A few grazing animals can severely impact large areas comprised mostly of seedlings. Seedling grasses need to build up energy reserves.

The Sierra Front-Northwestern Great Basin Area, Resource Advisory Council Standards and Guidelines as approved by the Secretary of Interior February 12, 1997, numbers 4 and 5 state:

"4. After a range fire or other natural catastrophic event, vegetation should be returned to the native species as rapidly as possible, to afford forage and habitat for native animals. If a nurse crop is needed to protect the land from erosion, all native nurse crops should be used first.

5. Treated areas will be rested from livestock grazing for two growing seasons or until seedlings are established or the vegetative response has achieved objective levels. Wild horses and burros removed from Herd Management Areas will be restored after rehabilitation objectives have been met."

c. Land Use Plan Conformance Statement:

The proposed action described below is in conformance with the Final Lahontan Resource Management Plan approved in the Record of Decision signed on September 3, 1985. The section of this document titled "Implementation of the Resource Management Plan" states "Wild horse management will be guided by HMAPs. These plans would be developed through consultation with interested parties and would be coordinated with livestock and wildlife plans. They would be focused on wild horse management through determination of proper horse use levels, development of water sources, and population and habitat monitoring studies." (page 2-10). It is also clearly consistent with the rangeland management objective, "Improve the condition of the public rangelands so as to improve productivity for all rangeland values." (page 2-1).

The proposed action is also clearly consistent with the wild horse objectives found in the Reno Management Framework Plan approved in 1982. The objective states "Maintain viable populations of wild horses and provide the necessary forage, water and habitat to the wild horses in all existing Wild Horse Areas (WHAs) where the majority of the area is made up of public lands."

The following Land Use Plan and activity plan(s) apply to the geographic area of the proposed action and alternatives:

Final Reno Grazing Environmental Impact Statement (1982), Management Framework Plan, Major Land Use Decision Summary and Environmental Impact Statement Record of Decision (1982), Lahontan Rangeland Program Summary Update (1989), Flanigan HMAP (1990), Flanigan Wild Horse Removal Plan (1993).

C. CHAPTER II - PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES

a. Proposed Action:

The proposed action is to temporarily remove wild horses from the Flanigan HMA. Approximately 180 wild horses would be capture. The younger (9 years and under) animals would be placed into the adoption program. The oldest animals would be placed into a sanctuary and approximately 30 to 50 animals would be placed onto private pastures until fire restoration goals have been met, and then released back into the HMA. Older unadoptable animals may be placed in HMA's that are below AML.

This action is necessary to restore the range adversely impacted by the Fish Fire which burned 47,000 acres. The animals would be removed in the Fall of 1999 or as soon as possible. Authority for this action is contained in the Wild Free Roaming Horse and Burro Act of 1971 (Public Law 92-195) and regulations contained in 43 CFR 4720.1 and 4770.3(c).

Horses would be captured by the methods described in the Flanigan Wild Horse Removal Plan (1993). This plan outlined removal procedures and is still valid. Copies of the removal plan can be obtained by contacting the Carson City Field Office.

Impounded, privately-owned animals will be handled in accordance with the Bureau of Land Management, Nevada Sate Office Instruction Memoranda NV-84-116 and NV-85-416.

b. Alternatives:

No action.

1. No removal would take place; Approximately 180 wild horses would remain in the area.

D. CHAPTER III - AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

a. Scoping and Issue Identification:

The proposed action was reviewed by BLM resource specialists in the Carson City Field Office. The following issues were raised for consideration in the environmental assessment.

b. Proposed Action:

Critical Elements of the Human Environment Paragraph:

The following critical elements of the human environment are not present or are not affected by the proposed action or alternatives in this EA: (specifically required by statute, regulation, executive order, etc.)

	<u>Determined By</u>
Air Quality.....	Terri Knutson
Areas of Critical Environmental Concern.....	Mike McQueen
Cultural Resources.....	Gary Bowyer
Environmental Justice.....	Mike McQueen
Farm Lands (prime or unique).....	Mike McQueen
Floodplains	Bashir Sulahria
Native American Religious Concerns.....	Gary Bowyer
Paleontology.....	Gary Bowyer
Threatened or Endangered Animals.....	Rick Brigham
Threatened or Endangered Plants.....	Dean Kinnerson
Wastes (hazardous or solid).....	Bashir Sulahria
Wetlands/Riparian.....	Jim deLaureal
Wild and Scenic Rivers.....	Arthur Callan
Wilderness.....	Arthur Callan

Resources Present but not Affected Paragraph: (other than critical elements)
Bureau specialists have further determined that the following resources, although present in the project area, are not affected by the proposed action:

1. Minerals
2. Socioeconomic

Resources Present and Brought Forward for Analysis:

1. Wild Horses

An estimated 180 wild horses occupy the Flanigan HMA. This number exceeds the AML and therefore the carrying capacity of the HMA under normal conditions. With 61% of the habitat burned the HMA is unsuitable for this level of use. At the current level the horses would be subjected to severe stress which would lead to loss of foals and likely even adult animals through malnutrition.

Some horses may attempt to disperse to areas outside of the HMA which would also cause excessive stress. Other, animals would likely remain in the burned area consuming seeding grasses which would inhibit or negate the revegetation

efforts for the HMA. This could suppress the carrying capacity of the area for years. A more detailed description of the wild horses can be found within the Flanigan HMAP and EA (1990).

2. Livestock

The Flanigan HMA comprises 17% of the area of the Flanigan Grazing Allotment. Utilization of the burned areas by horses, livestock, and wildlife would suppress the revegetation of the burned areas. This would depress the carrying capacity of the HMA thus, reducing the number of animals which can utilize the HMA. A more detailed description of the grazing system can be found in the Flanigan Allotment Management Plan (1988).

3. Wildlife

The HMA provides habitat for mule deer (winter and yearlong), pronghorn, bighorn sheep, sage grouse and many other animal species. As with wild horses and livestock grazing, wildlife use will depress the carrying capacity of the area for all grazing species until the vegetation has recovered from the fire. During range recovery the vegetation is most vulnerable to grazing pressures. Until the habitat has recovered species diversity within the HMA will be reduced as well as absolute numbers of individuals (plants and animals). A more detailed description of the wildlife and habitat can be found in the Wildlife Habitat Management Plan.

4. Vegetation

Depending on the intensity of a fire, some grass and shrub species can sprout naturally. In addition to natural processes the Bureau will apply seeds to the burned areas this fall or winter. Grazing animals, would negatively effect the seeding efforts. Ideally all grazing animals would be removed from the burned areas for 2 growing seasons. In order to facilitate or achieve vegetative recovery, grazing pressures must be minimized in the burned areas for 2 years, until the grasses and shrubs are reestablished.

5. Water Resources

Until vegetation is reestablished water quality will be degraded due to increased soil erosion.

6. Soils

Soil erosion would increase due to reduced vegetative cover and the associated root structures. Top soil would be lost, possibly decreasing the HMA's ability to support plants at the pre-fire level. A more detailed description of the soils can be found in the Flanigan HMAP.

7. Riparian

Riparian areas provide important habitat to a suite of animal and plant species. Under reduced forage conditions, such as fire rehabilitation, wild horses may degrade riparian areas.

8. Noxious Weeds

There are no known noxious weeds within the HMA. However, this area has not been surveyed for noxious weeds. Noxious weeds easily invade disturbed areas. In order to minimize the potential for establishment or spread of noxious weeds it would be beneficial to minimize the length of time that areas remain unvegetated.

c. Alternatives

The description of the affected environment for the No Action alternative would be the same as that for the Proposed Action.

E. Chapter IV - ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

a. Proposed Action

Environmental Impacts :

1. Wild Horses

Implementation of the proposed action would temporarily remove the wild horse from the Flanigan HMA. This would allow native vegetation to become reestablished naturally as well as protect planned reseeding projects scheduled to begin this fall. After 2 growing seasons of rest or until restoration goals are met 30 to 50 wild horses would be returned to the HMA. It is anticipated that within 4 to 5 years, 30 horses will increase to 80 head and achieve AML. If more animals are released the recovery time to the AML will be decreased. These predictions are based on a starting population of 30 and a growth rate of between 20% - 24% annually. The exact number of animals returned to the HMA will vary depending on how many animals evade capture attempts within the HMA and the age structure of removed animals.

Once the horses are returned the HMA the population would be managed as prescribed in the HMAP. The genetic diversity of the Flanigan HMA herd is discussed in the Flanigan HMAP. Genetic diversity within the herd is deemed sufficient to ensure maintenance of healthy wild horse populations in the HMA after implementation of the proposed action.

2. Livestock

In response to the wild land fires and loss of forage all livestock have been removed from the Flanigan HMA. To allow for the reestablishment of vegetation within the HMA it will be rested for 2 growing seasons before livestock use is allowed to resume. Implementation of the proposed action, and removal of approximately 180 wild horses from the HMA, would facilitate the reestablishment of vegetation through natural processes and seedings outlined in BLM fire rehabilitation plans. These actions are expected to result in productive range conditions that would provide forage for livestock after 2 growing seasons. Livestock operations are expected to indirectly benefit from implementation of the proposed action which is anticipated to facilitate range recovery.

3. Wildlife

Implementation of the proposed action will benefit both large and small wildlife species. All wildlife species require specific habitats. For the majority of wildlife species vegetation comprises an essential component. The proposed action is expected to speed up reestablishment of vegetation communities which will benefit wildlife by providing adequate habitat components such as cover and forage.

4. Vegetation

Implementation of the proposed action is expected to facilitate vegetation recovery resulting from natural processes and BLM rehabilitation efforts by reducing grazing pressure on remaining plant communities and on young plants emerging in burned areas. Native vegetation and non-invasive non-native species utilized in BLM rehabilitation efforts will benefit from the reduction in grazing pressure during the plants critical establishment and developmental phases. Reduced grazing pressure on plants established in burned areas is also expected to allow these plants to develop sufficiently so they can once again provide a renewable forage base for horses, livestock and wildlife. Implementation of the proposed action is expected to provide direct benefits to plant communities within the HMA

5. Water Resources

Water quality in downstream areas is expected to benefit from the establishment of stable plant communities on burned areas of the HMA. Stable plant communities are essential in preventing soil erosion and the introduction of sediment into ephemeral and perennial streams. Implementation of the proposed action is expected to speed up reestablishment of the plant community in burned areas which will indirectly benefit water quality in down stream areas by stabilizing soils and reducing the amount of sediment moving into stream channels.

6. Soils

Soil erosion is expected to be reduced by implementation of the proposed action. Reestablishment of stable plant communities is the key to reducing soil erosion on what is now burned over barren areas. Roots help hold soil in place while vegetative cover disperses and reduces the impacts of raindrops on the soils. The proposed action is expected to accelerate recovery of plant communities which will in turn reduce soil erosion in burned areas. The proposed action is indirectly beneficial to soils.

7. Riparian

Riparian areas within the HMA are anticipated to benefit from implementation of the proposed action. In burned areas the remaining riparian vegetation will benefit from the reduction in grazing pressure. Reestablishment of riparian vegetation along stream channels will be facilitated by reducing the grazing pressure during the vulnerable seedling stages. In unburned areas of the HMA riparian areas will benefit from reduced grazing pressure that would otherwise occur when remaining horses and wildlife concentrate in these areas. All riparian areas in the HMA are expected to directly benefit from implementation of the proposed action.

8. Noxious Weeds

Noxious weeds often establish themselves in disturbed sites such as burned areas. Successful establishment of noxious weeds is a function of seed availability and the duration of time a suitable site remains in existence. Implementation of the proposed action is expected to facilitate reestablishment of plant communities in the burned areas of the HMA. Rapid establishment of such a community will minimize areas available for colonization by noxious weeds.

b. No Action Alternative

Environmental Impacts :

1. Wild Horses

Implementation of the no action alternative would be detrimental to the wild horse habitat and population remaining in the Flanigan HMA. If the horse population is not reduced the herd will face shortages of forage in the HMA since the recent Fish wildfire burned approximately 61% of the HMA. Reduced forage will cause increased competition for the remaining forage between horses and wildlife. The estimated 180 horses in the HMA will concentrate use in unburned areas and/or move out of the HMA to obtain forage in nearby unburned areas. Horses that stray onto private land will be subject to removal through request of the land owner. Horses that move onto Federal lands outside the HMA will compete with livestock and wildlife for forage existing in these areas. Horses that remain in the HMA will face starvation and

reduced fitness levels associated with food shortage. This will make them more susceptible to disease. Impacts on the number of horses in the HMA may be similar to the proposed action. When seedlings sprout in the burned areas the grazing by horses will slow the recovery of the HMA negating or impairing rehabilitation efforts and substantially lowering the carrying capacity.

2. Livestock

No short term direct impacts to livestock are expected to result from implementation of the no action alternative. All livestock have been removed from the HMA. They will not be allowed to use the area for 2 growing seasons. The reestablishment of a plant community would provide adequate forage needs for livestock, wild horses and wildlife. Implementation of the no action alternative is expected to delay the reestablishment of vegetation communities on burned areas of the HMA and adversely impact existing vegetation in the unburned areas by concentrating grazing use in those areas. This would cause an indirect impact on livestock operations by delaying their ability to use the area for a period that may exceed 2 growing seasons.

3. Wildlife

Wildlife populations are expected to remain depressed until burned areas establish stable plant communities. An exception to this would be small species that are adapted to early seral stage communities. The no action alternative is expected to delay successful establishment of vegetation on burned areas and result in excessive grazing in the unburned areas. This will reduce wildlife populations in the short and mid term.

4. Vegetation

Vegetation communities would be adversely affected by implementation of the no action alternative. Grazing pressure on unburned areas of the HMA would increase and result in detrimental levels of grazing on plants in these areas. Reestablishment of range plants in the burned areas will be adversely affected by excessive grazing use during the plants vulnerable seedling stage. The 180 horses currently in the HMA are likely to severely damage plants in the HMA through excessive grazing.

5. Water Resources

The no action alternative would be expected to delay successful revegetation of burned areas. This is anticipated to result in continued degradation of down gradient water quality in the short and mid term. Water quality is expected to improve in the long term as vegetation communities become better established.

6. Soils

Excessive soil erosion would likely to continue for a longer period of time under the no action alternative. Soil erosion is closely tied to the establishment of vegetation root mass and ground cover. Since the no action alternative is expected to delay successful revegetation, accelerated soil erosion is likely to continue for a longer period of time.

7. Riparian

The no action alternative would result in excessive grazing on riparian vegetation remaining in both burned and unburned areas of the HMA. This situation would result in slower recovery of riparian vegetation species.

8. Noxious Weeds

The no action alternative is anticipated to delay successful revegetation of burned areas. This would result in fire disturbed sites remaining available for noxious weed colonization for a longer period of time than would occur under the proposed action. More noxious weed colonization would likely occur under the no action alternative.

c. Mitigation Measures

All mitigation measures are presented in the proposed action.

d. Residual Impacts

Residual impacts of the proposed action are limited to the temporary (4-5 years) reduction in wild horse numbers below the lower range of the AML established in the Flanigan HMAP.

e. Cumulative Impacts

In 1999 wild fires have burned approximately of 200,000 acres of rangeland in the Carson City Field Office administrative area. Cumulative impacts resulting from the effects of fire on HMAs in the field office include impacts on 4 HMAs. Wildfire burned 61% of the Flanigan, 6.5% of the Clan Alpine, 65% of the New Pass, and 2% of the Desatoya HMAs. No removal actions are planned for the Desatoya HMA. Horse removals in the Clan Alpine, HMA would not reduce horse numbers below the lower range of the AML adopted in the HMAP. In the Flanigan HMA the proposed action would temporarily (2 years) remove all wild horses. However, wild horses would benefit from the successful reestablishment of a healthy plant community. By successfully reestablishing and maintaining a healthy plant community the HMA will support a larger healthier population of wild horses than would otherwise be possible. Thus we conclude the proposed action combined with other emergency removal actions in the Field Office area are not expected to have significant cumulative

impacts to horse populations in the Field Office administrative area.

Cumulative impacts to vegetation, soils, water resources, riparian, noxious weeds, and wildlife resulting from wildfires in the Carson City Field Office area are expected to be adverse in the short term but neutral in the long term. The duration of cumulative adverse impacts to these resources is dependent on the successful establishment of vegetation communities on burned areas. Revegetation will occur through natural process and rehabilitation efforts conducted by the BLM. Since the proposed action is anticipated to facilitate revegetation in the Flanigan HMA it is not expected to contribute to adverse impacts on these resources.

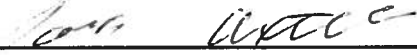


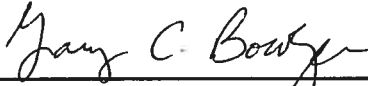



Since the proposed action is likely to allow the return of livestock to the HMA after 2 growing seasons it is not anticipated that the proposed action would contribute to cumulative adverse impacts to livestock grazing.

f. Monitoring

Vegetative monitoring will be conducted in accordance with approved Fire rehabilitation Plan.

F. **Chapter V - CONSULTATION & COORDINATION**

a. List of Preparers:

1.  30 Sep 99
John Axtell, Wild Horse and Burro Specialist Date
2.  9/30/99
James M. Gianola, Senior Rangeland management Specialist Date
3.  9/30/99
William R. Brigham, Wildlife Management Biologist Date
4.  9/30/99
Gary C. Bowyer, Historical Archaeologist Date
5.  9/30/99
James T. DeLaureal, Soil Scientist Date
6.  9/30/99
M. Bashir Sulahria, Hydrologist Date
7.  10-1-99
Mike McQueen, Environmental Coordinator Date

b. This plan and EA has been sent to the following persons and groups:

American Mustang and Burro Assoc.
Animal Protection Institute
Craig C. Downer
Dan Keiserman
Dalton and Juanita La Rue
American Horse Protection Assoc.
Daniel Grimemer, Office of Cong. Gibbons
Dawn Lappin, WHOA
Department of Administration, Nevada State Clearinghouse
Elaine Letcher
Friends of Nevada Wilderness
Fund for Animals
Harry Brown, Family Trust
Herb Capurro
International Society for the Protection of Mustangs and Burros
Joanne Hardesty
Mace Bergmann
Mary Conelly, Office of Sen. Reid
Michael Kierk
Nevada Cattlemen's Assoc.
Nevada Div. Of Wildlife, Richard Heap
Nevada Humane Society
Paul Clifford, Museum of Natural History
Rebecca Kunow
Roberta Royle
Sharon Crook
Steven Fulstone
The Mule Deer Foundation
Tom Baker, Office of Sen. Bryan
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
U.S. Humane Society

REFERENCES

1. Flanigan Herd Area Management Plan (Flanigan HMAP) approved in 1990.
2. Flanigan Wild Horse Removal Plan (WHRP) approved in 1993.

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT AND DECISION RECORD

DECISION:

It is my decision to implement the proposed action, which authorizes the removal of 180 wild horses from the Flanigan HMA. This action will temporarily remove all wild horses to facilitate the rehabilitation of the native plant community and restoration of the wild horse habitat.

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT:

I have reviewed this environmental assessment including the explanation and resolution of any potential significant environmental impacts. I have determined that the proposed action will not have a significant impact on the human environment and that an EIS is not required. I have determined that the proposed action is in conformance with the approved land use plan.

RATIONALE FOR THE DECISION:

Implementation of the proposed action is expected to facilitate revegetation of the burned areas within the Flanigan HMA. The proposed action is necessary to achieve a thriving ecological balance and multiple use relationship. Successful revegetation of burned areas will have beneficial impacts on soil, water and air resources present in the area. Wildlife and riparian areas are also expected to benefit from establishment of stable plant communities. Although the proposed action is expected to have temporary (4-5 year) adverse impacts on the numbers of wild horses in the Flanigan HMA, it will maintain the health of the wild horse herd, individual animals and the habitat for the long term.

Because of the substantial lose of habitat and the potential of negating rehabilitation efforts this decision for the immediate removal of wild horses from the Flanigan HMA and surrounding area is in Full Force and Effect. Authority for this action is contained in 43 CFR 4770.3(c).

MITIGATION:

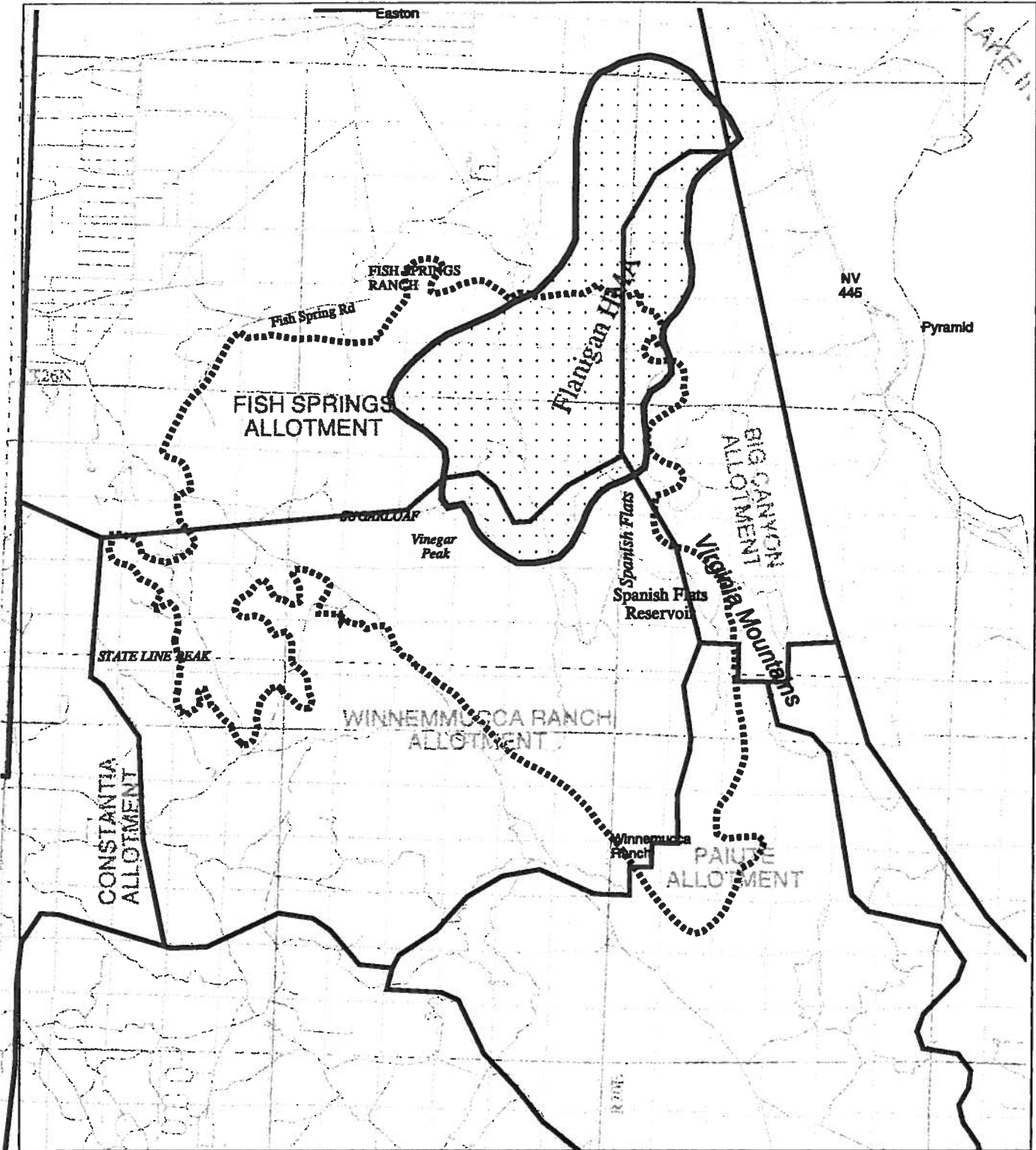
None identified.



Daniel Jacquet
Assistant Manger, Renewable Resources
Carson City Field Office

10/1/99
Date

Fish Fire HMA and Allotment Burn Areas



- Legend**
- Stippled area: Fish Fire
 - Thick solid line: HMA
 - Thin solid line: Allotments
 - Dashed line: Roads



ORIGIN AUGUST 28, 1999
Fish Fire BLM 787, Ken Simpson

Flanigan HMA Acres	17174
Burned Acres	10533
Percent Burned	61 %

